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#### OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
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To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Council conclusions on Yemen

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council conclusions on Yemen, adopted by the Council at its 3530th meeting held on 3 April 2017.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON YEMEN**

1. Recalling its Council Conclusions of 16 November 2015, the EU reaffirms its serious concern about the situation in Yemen. The ongoing conflict is having devastating consequences for the country and its population. In spite of the international pressure for a political solution to the crisis, the parties to the conflict have failed to reach a settlement and the fighting continues unabated. The number of civilian casualties continues to increase. Yemen's civilian infrastructure and institutions have been heavily affected by the war and are increasingly unable to deliver basic services. The humanitarian situation is catastrophic with 17 million food insecure Yemenis depending on external aid for their survival and 7.3 million people are at serious risk of famine. The situation is especially dire among children with over 2.2 million acutely malnourished. The dramatic economic downturn and the liquidity crisis further aggravate the dire situation.
2. Vulnerable groups, women and children are particularly affected by the on-going hostilities and the humanitarian crisis. The safety and well-being of women and girls is also of particular concern. The EU calls on all parties to the conflict to take all the necessary steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence including sexual and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict. The EU also strongly condemns the violations of the rights of the child and continued recruitment of child soldiers and is concerned at children's limited access to even basic health care and education.

3. The EU is likewise concerned at the consequences of the war in Yemen for the region's stability. The war has created the conditions for criminal and terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Da'esh in Yemen and others to thrive. The EU condemns all terror attacks in the strongest terms. The EU urges the Government of Yemen to assume its responsibilities in the fight against terrorist groups which are taking advantage of the current instability. It is particularly important that all parties to the conflict take resolute action against such groups, whose activities represent an additional threat to a negotiated settlement and pose significant risks to the security of the region and beyond. In addition, the conflict has resulted in an increase of incidents along Yemen's Red Sea coast, thus undermining freedom of navigation, endangering maritime trade in a crucial international shipping route.
4. There can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. The crisis can only be solved through a negotiation process, involving all the parties concerned, with the full and meaningful participation of women, and leading to an inclusive political solution. In this framework, the EU reiterates its strong support to the efforts of the UN Secretary General and the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, to achieve a resumption of negotiations and urges all parties to the conflict to react in a flexible and constructive manner and without preconditions to their efforts and fully and immediately implement all the provisions of relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The implementation of confidence building measures such as immediate steps towards a sustainable ceasefire, a mechanism for a monitored withdrawal of forces, facilitation of humanitarian and commercial access and the release of political prisoners will be essential to facilitate a return to the political track. For this process to be successful, the EU calls on all parties to urgently agree on a cessation of hostilities to be monitored by the United Nations as a first step towards the resumption of peace talks under UN leadership. The EU also calls on all international and regional actors to engage constructively with Yemeni parties to enable a de-escalation of the conflict and a negotiated settlement that respects the independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen.

5. The EU strongly condemns attacks against civilians and renews its urgent call on all parties to the conflict to ensure the protection of civilians and to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including to respect the principles of distinction, proportionality, and to take precaution in the conduct of hostilities. The EU is deeply concerned by the impact of ongoing hostilities, including bombardments, use of cluster munitions and reported use of antipersonnel mines as well as by attacks causing the destruction of civilian infrastructure including schools, medical facilities, residential areas, markets, water systems, ports and airports. Ensuring accountability for violations is an important part of the process to achieve a lasting settlement of the current conflict. We continue to support independent investigations into all alleged violations and abuses, with a view to ending impunity for crimes committed by all parties to the conflict in line with HRC resolution A/HRC/33/L.5 and the EU General Comment. The EU calls on all parties to the conflict to cooperate fully with the National Commission of Inquiry as well as with the enhanced OHCHR Yemen office and to allow them full access to all parts of Yemen. Both the final report by the National Commission of Inquiry as well as the written report of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights including violations and abuses since September 2014, to be presented to the Human Rights Council in September, are essential ingredients for further discussions.

6. The EU reiterates the urgent need to remove obstacles and bureaucratic hurdles preventing the delivery of life-saving assistance and to facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, which is impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction. The EU calls on state and non-state actors to ensure the safety and facilitate the secure access of relief workers and humanitarian personnel. In view of the dire humanitarian situation, access to all seaports is essential. Unfettered access must be guaranteed for commercial and humanitarian supplies. The EU urges the parties to ensure the full and effective functioning of Hodeida port and stresses its importance as a lifeline for humanitarian support and commercial access point for essential supplies. The EU stresses the importance of ensuring the effective and timely processing for commercial shipping, including fuel, and fully supports the continuation of UNVIM (United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism) and the full and unhindered implementation of its mandate. The full support of the Coalition and the Government of Yemen is needed in order for UNVIM to operate effectively and at full capacity. The EU calls for a reopening of Sana'a airport for commercial flights so that urgently needed medicine and commodities can be flown in and Yemenis in need of medical treatment can be flown out. The EU calls for the full implementation of the targeted arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council. In this regard, the EU also reiterates the strict application of the rules set in the Common Position 2008/944 on arms exports. The EU urges all parties to facilitate the swift resumption of salary payments in the public sector in all of Yemen and of the fulfilment of the mandate of the Central Bank.

7. The EU is ready to increase its efforts to support UN actions in the search of a political settlement of this crisis by offering its good offices to the parties to reach a cessation of hostilities and start negotiations. The EU and its member states are also ready to step up humanitarian assistance to the population across the country according to the rising needs and to mobilize their development assistance to fund projects in crucial sectors. On that basis, the EU is committed to provide support to the parties in reaching a settlement to the conflict and to contribute to the country's future reconstruction. The EU stresses once again the need for a coordinate humanitarian action under UN leadership as reflected in this year's Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan and urges all countries to contribute to addressing humanitarian needs. The EU welcomes the high-level pledging conference for the crisis in Yemen that will take place on 25 April in Geneva co-hosted by the Secretary-General of the UN and the governments of Sweden and Switzerland. The EU and its Member States will step up their coordinated outreach to the conflict parties concerning the facilitation of humanitarian access and protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The Council will follow the developments in Yemen closely and stands ready to increase its engagement to promote stability and prosperity in Yemen once a political solution to the current conflict has been found.
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